In the claims:

1. (currently amended) A handheld power saw, ~~having~~comprising a coupling means (10) for retaining and driving a saw blade (12) and connecting the saw blade (12) to a lifting rod (64) in an installed state of the saw blade (12), and ~~having~~ a guide assembly (14) for guiding an oscillating motion (16) of the saw blade (12), ~~characterized in that~~wherein the guide assembly (14) includes at least one lateral bracing means (18, 18') for shielding the coupling means (10) from shear forces acting on the saw blade (12).

2. (currently amended) The handheld power saw as defined by claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the bracing means (18, 18') is ~~intended~~configured for bracing on both sides against shear forces on the saw blade (12).

3. (currently amended) The handheld power saw as defined claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the bracing means (18, 18') is ~~embodied~~configured as a slide bearing.

4. (withdrawn and currently amended) The handheld power saw as defined by claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the coupling means (10) is ~~embodied~~configured as a detent coupling.

5. (currently amended) The handheld power saw as defined by claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the bracing means (18, 18') forms a two-dimensional contact face (46).

6. (currently amended) The handheld power saw as defined by claim 5, further including the saw blade (12),~~characterized in that~~ wherein the contact face (46) has a length (48) of at least 2 cm in a longitudinal direction (26) of the saw blade (12).

7. (withdrawn and currently amended) A handheld power saw, ~~having~~comprising a housing (20b), having a contact element (22b) for bracing the housing (20b) on a workpiece~~, and having~~ and a saw blade (12b), movable in oscillating fashion in a first direction (26b), with at least one cutting edge (30b) pointing in a working direction (28b), ~~characterized in that~~wherein the contact element (22b) is supported displaceably relative to the housing (20b).

8. (withdrawn and currently amended) The handheld power saw as defined by claim 7, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the contact element (22b) is displaceable, with a front edge (32b) pointing in the working direction (28b), at least as far as a height of the cutting edge (30b).

9. (withdrawn and currently amended) The handheld power saw as defined by claim 7, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the contact element (22b) has a recess (34b) that is open in the working direction (28b).

10. (withdrawn and currently amended) The handheld power saw as defined by claim 7, ~~characterized by~~further comprising a spring element (36b) for restoring the contact element (22b) to a position of repose.

11. (withdrawn and currently amended) The handheld power saw as defined by claim 7, ~~characterized by~~further comprising a detent element (24b) for locking the contact element (22b) in a detent position.

12. (withdrawn and currently amended) A saw blade (12) for a handheld power saw, ~~having~~comprising an oscillatory drive mechanism (38), ~~and having~~ a retention region (40) which is intended for connection with a coupling means (10) of the handheld power saw, ~~characterized by~~and a guide region (42) for contact of a lateral bracing means (18, 18') of the handheld power saw.

13. (withdrawn and currently amended) The saw blade (12) as defined by claim 12, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the guide region (42) has a greater thickness of material than a work region (44) with a cutting edge (30).

14. (withdrawn and currently amended) The saw blade (12) as defined by claim 12, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the guide region (42) and the work region (44) are joined by a laser welding process.

15. (new) The handheld power saw as defined by claim 1, wherein the guide assembly (14) includes a pressure roller (52), supported in sliding fashion on a bolt (50), and a pressure bolt (68) for guiding the saw blade (12).

16. (new) The handheld power saw as defined by claim 15, wherein the bolt (50) and the pressure bolt (68) are inserted in recesses which are provided in the bracing means (18, 18').

17. (new) The handheld power saw as defined by claim 16, wherein the recesses project out of an opposite face of the bracing means (18, 18') of the contact face (46).

18. (new) The handheld power saw as defined by claim 15, wherein the pressure roller (52) guides the saw blade (12) at a reverse edge of a cutting edge (30).

19. (new) The handheld power saw as defined by claim 1, wherein two lateral bracing means (18, 18') are provided.

20. (new) The handheld power saw as defined by claim 19, wherein in an installed state of the saw blade (12) the two bracing means (18, 18') are located mirror-symmetrically beside the saw blade (12).

21. (new) The handheld power saw as defined by claim 1, wherein the bracing means (18, 18') is composed of graphite-containing, lubricant-filled sintered bronze.

22. (new) The handheld power saw as defined by claim 1, wherein the bracing means (18, 18') has a rounded area (72) in a front region of the bracing means (18, 18') facing the saw blade (12).

23. The handheld power saw as defined by claim 1, wherein in an installed state of the saw blade (12) the contact face (46) of the bracing means (18, 18') abuts on a guide region (42) of the saw blade (12), located in a working direction (28) between a retaining region (40) of the saw blade (12) and a work region (44) of the saw blade (12).